

STORY 79

THE PLAIN SPEAKING OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE
BEFORE MALIK SHAH.

It was the 29th day of Ramzan, and in the evening Malik Shah surrounded by his nobles and courtiers was engaged in surveying the western horizon looking for the crescent which was to bring the message of I'd.

No crescent was visible but the courtiers who were sycophants and wanted to please the king cried out "There is the new moon." The king believed them and caused to be proclaimed that next day was to be the I'd-day.

Imam-ul-Harmain who was the chief justice and Mufti was informed of the king's proclamation. He made a thorough inquiry, and having satisfied himself that no new moon had been seen caused another proclamation to be made to the effect that the next day was a day of fasting and everybody should fast.

The king's false courtiers represented this proclamation as an act of sedition and an insult to the royal dignity. Upon this the king ordered the Mufti to be brought into his presence but with all honour due to his dignity. When the Mufti was informed that he was wanted by the king he made ready to go in the very clothes he was wearing. This too was represented as an affront to the king as the Mufti did not come to

the court in the dress.

The king was displeased but he knew the respect which was due to the office of the Quazi and asked him respectfully, "Quazi Sahib you are aware that a special dress is prescribed for the court. May I know why you have broken the rules of court etiquette, and have come here in your every day clothes?"

The Imam knew his duty. He was not in the least afraid and said, "O king, if I can go into the presence of Almighty Creator of the Heavens and the Earth in this dress, how can my coming into your presence in these clothes be an insult to you."

The king was struck by the truth of this reply, and proceeded to the next question. He said, "Implicit obedience to the rulers is enjoined by the Islam. May I know why you disobeyed our orders regarding the celebration of the I'd?" To this he made the following reply: "In matters which are quite explicit and according with the teaching of Islam every one is bound to obey the ruler as the executive head of the commonwealth of Islam. But in matters on which there is difference of opinion I as Mufti am bound to proclaim the decision according to the canons of the Islamic law and in such matters my decision has the same force and authority as a royal command. So you see I have done what was my duty." This bold but reasonable answer dissipated the anger of the king. He was pleased with the candour and moral courage of the Quazi and caused it to be proclaimed that his former proclamation was wrong and that of the Mufti was correct.